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Burmese AP4

first and then disembowelled with a sword-gash across the stomach, or rendered helpless by a few spear-thrusts. In either case the body was left hanging, to be picked clean by the vultures, and the bones gradually fell off. Formerly, when the mouth of the Irrawaddy was Burmese territory, a favourite method used to be to tie the convict down at the edge of the stream at low water and leave him to be drowned by the incoming tide. The fishes were often more expeditious than the vultures in devouring their prey. The favourite kind of stake for this purpose was the "stump of hell," the irregular short stem of the undeveloped trees in a mangrove swamp, looking like pinnacles or knobs rising out of the confused network of exposed roots.

But imprisonment was often worse than death. The prisons had never been cleaned out since they were made, some of them noisome underground cells, some flimsy wooden or bamboo structures open all round. The prisoners sat with their feet in the stocks perpetually, and the long bamboo which united them was occasionally triced up so far that the poor wretches only touched the ground with their shoulders. A favourite time for thus inverting them was at night. But a man who had not had enough money to satisfy the judge might often manage satisfactorily to square the jailer. If he effected that he was on the whole comfortable; he was allowed to go away in the morning, have his meals at home, and go back and deliver himself into custody at night again. But if he had no money, or no friends to pay it for him, his best course was to die at once, indeed he certainly would before long, for the only food to be had in prison was that supplied by relatives of the convicts. If no friend brought it, the jailer certainly would not supply any. It was better to be "proclaimed," to suffer maungkyaw, than to go to jail. This was a punishment almost confined to the capital, and greatly resembling the old English naval practice of flogging an offender "round the fleet." The criminal was taken to each gate of the city, to the corners of all the chief streets, and to sundry other frequented places. At each of these points his crime and sentence were read out and he was flogged. None but the strong-constitutioned could stand it, but those who survived were free men.